Tells the Facts and Names the Names

$2.50

CounterPunch

April 16-30, 2001 *Alexander Cockburn and Jeffrey St. Clair* VOL. 8, NO. 8

In This Issue

JESSE JACKSON

- After 1988 Reverend truly became "Jesse Jackson Inc". The tradeoff for scattering the troublemakers the '84 and '88 campaigns brought into the political tent was a job as head overseer on the Democratic Party plantation.

BOB KERREY

- Newsweek let him off the hook. The NYT waited till he left the Senate. So is it OK for the New School, which once welcomed refugees from Nazi Germany, to shelter a war criminal?

QUEBEC CITY

- The much-touted 'Teamster-Turtle' nexus that emerged in the streets of Seattle has proved difficult to sustain.

Big Daddy and the Plantation

BY KEVIN ALEXANDER GRAY

I grew up in a National Enquirer house. My mother reads it weekly and my brother works in the plant that prints them. There is something cosmic about Reverend Jesse Jackson, for whom I used to work, being in that rag. Now, every time I think of Reverend, Diana Ross's Love Child plays in my head. And I have gotten enough email cartoons like the one with Reverend's head (with a ponytail) on a little girl's body. This was low down — as low down as the state of black and progressive politics. And the latter should be our real concern.

The problem with Reverend Jesse Jackson isn't that he fathered a child with a woman he didn't marry. The problem is that Reverend has used a movement predicated on protecting rights of the many with gaining privilege for a few. Our movement is anti-privilege. Now, Reverend's privileges are being challenged. Who's to say that's a bad thing?

The new "morality" questions as well as past financial problems at Operation Breadbasket that led to his split with Martin Luther King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference are now regular fodder for the Sunday morning talk shows. The pundits' assessment: Reverend is not now and has never been accountable to anybody. Washington Post columnist David Broder gave Reverend's refusal to run for mayor of DC as evidence of his fear of accountability. Columnist Clarence Page, the only black guy on a news show on a regular basis, said the stories and financial questions were old news. Both fretted over Reverend's troubles but neither counted him completely out. Still, maybe his days as a national leader were numbered. (Maybe?)

But the problem isn't that Reverend is a has-been. It's worse: he's become an insider. That's what makes my desire to see Reverend either change or be gone from the scene different from Broder's and Page's. To them, Reverend is becoming ineffective as the "designated Negro".

There are also those awaiting the day when vice president Dick Cheney has his final heart attack so that Colin Powell becomes vice president. Understanding racial solidarity, they believe that the African Americans will predictably rally around the first black vice president. This group doesn't want Reverend to affect that dynamic. So, they beat up on him now in hopes of getting him out of the way. Things they ignored in the past make the Enquirer's cover. They have no desire to see Al Sharpton elevated to "national Negro leader" but they know that Powell trumps Sharpton or anyone else for that matter.

Workplace sex will always be around. No doubt, on the job there is sexual harassment and conniving plotters of both sexes. The problem with Reverend isn't workplace sex (except maybe to his wife Jackie and those who believe a minister and married man should act a certain way). Jesse Jackson and the Rainbow Coalition's problems are patronage and bossism.

The Rainbow "organization" is not committed to any movement—past or

(**Big Daddy** continued on page 5)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Our Little Secrets

Bob Kerrey: Our Kurt Waldheim

When he was at Newsweek in 1998 Gregory Vistica had Senator Bob Kerrey nailed for war crimes, but Newsweek's editors decided that since Kerrey was no longer a presidential candidate it wasn't worth exposing him. It's okay for a US Senator to be a war criminal. Then the New York Times finally decided to run Vistica's story because Kerrey had left the Senate. It's okay for a war criminal to be head of the New School, which has moral philosophers standing by to counsel any students bothered about the affair, which they certainly should be. In fact we hope that at this very moment New School firebrands are demanding that Kerrey step down. And if not, why not?

Few of Bob Kerrey's former colleagues in Washington are shedding tears for his belated exposure as a murderer of women and children. Through his senate career, Kerrey earned a reputation as one of the most arrogant and condescending people on the Hill. "He was the Democrats' Alan Simpson", a Republican senate staffer tells us. "Smug, holier-than-thou and a vicious backstabber. Remember, it was Kerrey's Hamlet routine on the first Clinton budget, even more than gays in the military, that sabotaged the reputation of Clinton administration."

Gregory Vistica's story for the New York Times magazine reveals that in 1969 Kerrey, then a Lieutenant led a midnight raid on the small fishing village of Thanh Phong in the Mekong Delta, which left at least 14 civilians dead, all but one of whom were women and children. The one man was an elderly civilian, who, according to fellow SEAL Gerhard Klann's account, had his throat slit with a knife while Kerrey held him pinned to ground. Back then Kerrey bragged that he was "ready to take Hanoi with a knife in my teeth". When Kerrey and his men saw a few people run away towards the woods, they shot them in the back. Kerrey received a Bronze Star for his valiant conduct that night.

The basic facts of this story have been around for 22 years. The Vietnamese villagers complained to the US Army about the atrocity a few days after Kerrey had fallaciously reported to his commanding officer that the raid had killed 21 people, "all VC". A cursory investigation was launched, but Kerrey himself was never even interviewed. There's a perfectly sound reason for that. Although it's not good press to kill women and children, that was exactly the mission of Kerrey's Raiders and the other Navy SEALs and Army patrols in the region. They were doing what was euphemistically called "counter-terrorism" operations, where the object was to kill civilians who supposedly were associating with Viet Cong.

Kerrey's Raiders were operating at the height of the CIA/US military joint project of assassination, kidnapping, torture and terrorism known as the Phoenix Program. Interestingly, the phrase "Phoenix Program" and the CIA do not make an appearance in Vistica's article. Apparently, some stories are still unmentionable.

CounterPuncher Douglas Valentine's book The Phoenix Program is not only the best account of this bloody operation but also one of the finest histories of the Vietnam war. Valentine shows that Phoenix was a program set up to kill not only suspected Viet Cong village leaders, but civilians as well. In the end, the death toll from Phoenix operations reached as many as 70,000.

The book received scant reviews—most of those unremittingly hostile. The CIA even commissioned a Harvard doctoral candidate to write a book-length rebuttal.

"Kerrey was certainly on a Phoenix mission", Valentine tells us. "There were no Vietnamese with the SEALs, so it had to be unilateral CIA."

As a senator, Kerrey carved a niche for himself as a hawkish Democrat, a guilt-free Vietnam vet with an amputated leg and medals to prove his mettle. He was an early luminary in the Democratic Leadership Council. But even his fling with Debra Winger couldn't transfer any warmth to Kerrey's political personality, which was always peevish, aloof and condescending. "Kerry likes to think of himself as a maverick, but he's really just a prick," says a senate staffer.

In 1998, Kerrey was publicly flirting with a run for the presidency that would have pitted him against Al Gore, a long-time foe. That's when Vistica, then a military correspondent for Newsweek, found Gerhard Klann, learned his version of the massacre, dug up the after action reports from the Navy and confronted Kerrey. Two days later, Kerrey decided not to run for president. And Newsweek killed the story.

Kerrey has been lionized by the DC press corps for his candor, but his behavior in this affair has been anything but. He claims that Klann isn't telling the truth about that night, but says he doesn't blame him. He claims he was so tortured by guilt that he thought of killing himself, but he also suggests that perhaps the women and children of Thanh Phong were really killed by the "missing men" and placed in a cluster to make it appear as though they were killed by his raiders. He says he was ashamed of his medals, but he used the awards relentlessly as the launching pad for his presidential ambition.

The press has created another false dichotomy out of what are relatively minor differences in the accounts of Klann and Kerrey. Some of the reports have disparaged Klann as an alcoholic with a grudge. Kerrey himself has stoked this theory, suggesting ridiculously that Klann, now a steelworker in Pennsylvania, was motivated by irrational jealousy over not winning the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Despite the smears of Kerrey and his pr flacks, Klann seems entirely trustworthy, a man tormented by horrible deeds. But let's be clear. Even if we accept Kerrey's self-serving account of his actions that night it amounts to a confession of a heinous war crime—not, as his friends in the press are characterizing it, a "tragic mistake" committed "under extreme duress" in "the heat of

Editors
Alexander Cockburn
Jeffrey St. Clair

Business Manager
Becky Grant

Design
Deborah Thomas

Counselor
Ben Sonnenberg

Published twice monthly except August, 22 issues a year:
$40 individuals,
$100 institutions/supporters
$30 student/low-income
CounterPunch.
All rights reserved.
CounterPunch
3220 N. St., NW, PMB 346
Washington, DC, 20007-2829
1-800-840-3683 (phone)
1-800-967-3620 (fax)
www.counterpunch.org

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Kerrey was certainly on a Phoenix mission. There were no Vietnamese with the SEALs, so it had to be unilateral CIA."

battle" and "the fog of war".

Supposedly wracked with indecision whether to accept the Congressional Medal of honor for a military action (subsequent to the one now under dispute,) Kerrey finally did so on May 14, 1970, just 10 days after the Ohio National Guard killed four student antiwar protesters at Kent State In other words, at a moment of maximal national revulsion against the war, Kerrey went along with the Pentagon's urgent desire for heroes and presented his chest to Nixon, who pinned the medal to it. So much for ambiguity. And now, and only now, is he considering whether to give back the Bronze Star awarded him for the mission in which he personally assisted in the throat-slitting of an elderly peasant and ordered the killing of babies.

How many others like him are in the congress, the state department, or corporate boardrooms? Consider the fact that not a single mainstream publication has printed a word about the career of Robert Simmons, the newly elected congressman from Connecticut, a former CIA officer and Phoenix Program interrogation/torture expert. CounterPunch ran Valentine's story on Simmons right before the election. We hoped to stir up a fuss, but no corporate reporter troubled Simmons about his past.

Handfuls of Silver

We lead this issue with Kevin Gray's savage account of Jesse Jackson's self-aggrandizing betrayals in the years since his run for the Democratic nomination in 1988.Veteran CounterPunch subscribers may recall that three years ago we reported how Jesse Jackson had betrayed minority auto dealers who had sought his aid in their battle to get fair treatment from General Motors.

Amid scrutiny of his finances Jackson's non-profits are now hastily amending their returns, and the pattern we noted is now set forth in detail. Jackson's Citizenship Education Fund's newly disclosed donations include $50,000 from Burger King, which had Jackson's support in its recent legal battle with a major black franchise owner.

The largest donations added to the return were $125,000 from Bell-Atlantic and $120,000 from the New York Stock Exchange. It will be recalled that Jackson abandoned his plans to lead an inauguration day protest about the Florida gerrymander after phone calls from the same donors on the New York Stock Exchange.

Non-Standard Ed

Our business manager Becky Grant homeschools her two boys, so when we got CounterPuncher Susan Ohanian's Caught in the Middle: Nonstandard Kids and a Killing Curriculum (Heinemann) we handed it over to Becky. Here's her reaction.

Though I often look at books on alternative education in the hopes of being inspired to be a better home schooling parent, usually they're so dull I don't make it through the first chapter. Not so with Ohanian's book.

Through an entertaining medley of experiences she had when teaching seventh and eight grade remedial reading in a poor urban school in New York, Ohanian offers an inside look at the problems with all public schools. The main issue she addresses is that standards for the definition of success are set and all students are expected to fit into that definition.

In each chapter Susan relates an experience with one of her remedial students and how the administration expected her to use a standard method for handling problem students. She realized that these students were unlikely to succeed under those circumstances. In each situation she uses alternatives to get positive reactions from the child.

Susan is warned by her new colleagues of Sylvia, "The Zulu Chief", supposedly an unruly, violent child. Upon meeting Silvia, Susan finds she is actually cooperative and helpful and one of the best readers in the school. The most polite kid turns out to be the thief responsible for many recent in-school thefts. She knows one student is crazy, needing serious help, but he continues to pass through the grades, just because the teachers don't want the poor kid in their class another year. She tries to get him help, but is continually turned down. It's not that these kids are necessarily stupid, many of them are very bright and creative, but they are forced to stay in the classrooms, expected to rotate classes every 45 minutes. But they can barely make it to class on time, let alone remember homework assignments and participate in classroom discussions. They end up becoming faculty room legends of notorious villains or slipping through the cracks without notice.

Susan is expected to teach from texts so monotonous that even the teachers have never read them. She scraps the boring texts in lieu of the novel idea of introducing books that are actually entertaining and turn the kids on to reading. In fact, the kids are constantly saying "Miz O., we wish you wuz a real teacher". They don't give her credit as a real teacher, because she doesn't test constantly and the "work" they do in her class isn't painfully boring or beyond their grasp.

The problems Susan identifies aren't specific to poor urban schools. We have many of the same problems in our rural public school here in Petrolia, which is why I've home schooled Nick and Alex for four years now. Nick and Alex have different learning styles, so how can the "Standardistos" expect kids from different families, economic situations, ethnic backgrounds, etc. to learn from a cookie cutter curriculum? We cannot go on pretending that all children are equal outside of the classroom. Public schools are badly set up day-care centers where labels are given and stick from kindergarten through twelfth grade.

Susan Ohanian demonstrates that teachers need to be endlessly creative and willing to put aside pedagogy in order to be ready for that "teachable moment". She has that rare quality that it takes to be around seventh and eighth graders for six hours a day and not want to strangle them, but actually has them enjoying school and learning. Unfortunately, many teachers are tapping their fingers, waiting for retirement.

Although Caught In the Middle addresses the failure of public schools, it offers hope and insight for solutions that come from creative teaching and not from "educators" who've never stepped into a classroom, and who force-feed new programs purchased for the school district by the state, itself lobbied by salesfolk with fancy packaging and a gimmicky new look promising great results in the form of higher scores on standard tests. Educational reformers should keep Ohanian in mind when reinventing schools, teacher education and the relationship between kids and adults. **CP**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Battle in Quebec

How Do You Like Your Oeufs?

By Jennifer Berkshire

While the American media kept its cameras dutifully trained on the 'Black Bloc' members battling the police, and kindred troublemakers firing giant stuffed teddy bears into the crowds of riot police by way of an enormous catapult, the Canadian media drew a neat distinction between these bad "oeufs" and the peaceful protesters who participated in the Quebec Federation of Labor's (FTQ) giant AFL-CIO style march. Jean Chretién, the Candian Prime Minister, went so far as to call the latter event a "parade".

The FTAA events drew much of their support from the local population. Joining bus loads of students and trade unionists from Ontario, Ottawa and Toronto were thousands of Quebecois union members and local residents.

By Canadians in general, and the Quebecois in particular, the ugly chain link fence that encircled Old Quebec was viewed as an assault upon their democratic rights. Tearing down the wall, therefore, was seen as a legitimate response to a process from which the people had been barred. "During the mega-union-demo of more than 30,000 people Saturday," the Quebec-based Emile-Henry Anarchist group announced in a press release, "several thousand people moved up town to attack the security perimeter. The Black Bloc and unionists, most notably from the car industry, committed several spectacular actions. We are talking about several breaches in the fence."

The Saturday "parade" - attendance was estimated by Le Journal de Quebec at 67,000 - was officially called "The March of the Americas", and dubbed "the People's March".The name seemed accurate. The event – advertised on the radio for weeks – drew members of every Canadian union, families, churchgoers, local residents and students. Students at fifteen universities across the province had gone on strike to be present; several Quebec City high schools also shut down in protest. The winding march, which took three hours to pass through the heart of Quebec City, was a visual panorama. But it was the random snap shots that really spoke to the nature of the protests. The Quebecois teenager on a skateboard, practicing 'ollies' on the steps of the train station, a black bandanna tied across his face. The two well-dressed women tripping down Cote d'Abraham in high heels, Hermés scarves over their mouths to keep the tear gas out. Sinclair Stevens, the former industry minister in the Mulroney government, shrouded in tear gas, accepting a vinegar-soaked rag from a protester.

For all practical purposes, the muscle – and the money – behind the anti-FTAA events was provided by the 400,000 member Quebec Federation of Labor – hardly a bastion of radicalism by Canadian standards. But while the flags and banners of hundreds of unions were flying high over Quebec City, one labor group was noticeably absent: the AFL-CIO. President John J. Sweeney made a brief appearance at the trade union forum of the People's Summit, to tout the federation's new global poster project, an initiative to post the International Labor Organization's declaration of rights at work in workplaces in 148 nations and territories. Ed Fire, head of the manufacturing division for the newly merged IUE/CWA, was the only other American labor leader present.

There were, however, hundreds of union workers from New England who traveled to Quebec City to protest. Workers from General Electric and Raytheon rode over night on buses to march alongside an estimated 2,000 people from Vermont to Rhode Island. "I'm here because this globalization plan they have doesn't work for workers," said Don Rama, a pipefitter at the Bath Iron Works ship yard in Maine, and a volunteer fire fighter in his hometown of Wiscasset. The participation of the New England trade union delegation was a decidedly low-key affair, the product of months of grass-roots organizing by Massachusetts Jobs with Justice and the newly-formed Northeast Labor Committee for Global Justice. No AFL-CIO Field Mobilization staff were assigned to this undertaking; the union members paid their own way and got the word out in local newspapers and at executive board meetings.

So just where was the AFL-CIO while tens of thousands of trade unionists were marching in Quebec City? "We have to give the Canadian unions credit", said Jeff Crosby, president of IUE/CWA local 201 in Lynn, MA, "They really understand that this issue affects all workers. For the most part, that isn't the case in the American labor movement." Crosby, who is also the president of a Central Labor Council north of Boston, was refused entry into Canada after border police discovered that he'd been arrested in 1971 at a Vietnam War protest. Only after a public protest campaign at the Canadian embassy was he allowed in.

By Monday, the clouds of tear gas over Quebec City had finally begun to dissipate, and the dreaded security perimeter was no more. Most protesters had returned to school or work, although an estimated 450 were still being held in local prisons, awaiting bail hearings. Among them was at time of writing, maybe still is, CLAC activist Jaggi Singh, who was bundled into an unmarked car by security officials during Friday's protests. The officials maintained that Singh is the owner of the above-mentioned "teddy bear catapult". But in the meantime, another group, Deconstructionist Institute for Surreal Topology (DIST), claimed responsibility for the enormous sling shot, and says that Singh is not one of them. "Jaggi is not a member of our group, and has never been a member of our group," a DIST press release insisted. "Nor will we ever let him become a member of our group, as his sense of humor does not meet the rigorous standards required by DIST."

> ***"His sense of humor does not meet the rigorous standards required by DIST."***

But if the Canadian coalition is a model for the kind of representative movement that can truly talk back to neo-liberal trade jargon, it won't be easily replicated here in the US. The much-touted 'Teamster-Turtle' nexus that emerged in the streets of Seattle has proved difficult to sustain. And despite plenty of progressive talk, the AFL-CIO has largely stepped back from the role it played during the WTO protests. American unions will have to step up to the plate – and soon.

"They need to participate" says the IUE's Crosby. "Not just the manufacturing unions, but the public sector and the service unions too. They shouldn't feel discomfort over tactics and strategy. As we saw in Quebec, this is a movement that has room for everybody." CP

Jennifer Berkshire *is a writer and labor activist in Massachusetts.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A 'big daddy' is a straw boss thinking he is the boss, or putting up the front that he believes it, as part of doing the boss's business. Tupac called it thug life.

(**Big Daddy** continued from page 1)
future (unless we are foolish enough to believe in a "Wall Street movement"). Jessephiles have no particular political goals, agenda or ideology beyond cutting the deal and protecting their privileges as part of the black bourgeoisie. It's always been about big daddyism, a concept that covers it all: sexual harassment, nepotism, exploitation, plotting, foolishness, favoritism and all kinds of other isms, schisms and confusion. A "big daddy" is a straw boss thinking he is the boss, or putting up the front that he believes it, as part of doing the boss's business. Tupac called it thug life.

To the Jessephiles, the Rainbow Coalition's biggest accomplishment was to become Rainbow/PUSH, but that's nonsense. The Rainbow Coalition was supposed to be about politics and organizing. PUSH is about "getting the gold". The "gold" comes with being silent about the exploitation and unfair practices of the corporate givers. To know who's doing the buying one needs only to read the magazines or newsletters of any black organization. In return for silence some "big daddy" gets some stock, a seat on a board, a job or a check. Reverend isn't even the master of this game; that would be Vernon Jordan.

Much of Reverend and his crew's present good fortune comes from the lawsuits or threats of lawsuits by grassroots groups whose primary concern is that their constituents receive fair treatment. Grassroots groups sued merging banks (such as Bank of America for gobbling NationsBank, which used to be Citizens and Southern/Sovran) over adherence to the Community Reinvestment Act. The outcome was that Reverend and the Jessephiles got the gold. The price was the abandonment attempts to enforce the Community Reinvestment Act. "Big daddys" often stifle grassroots protest, threats of economic actions or boycotts because there is an existing deal with the company or a deal waiting to be made. Reverend often says "the only bad deals are the ones you are not in the room for". A watered down CRA was passed last year with little public comment. Why? Because the banks and the feds now sidestep grassroots groups and cut the deal with the big daddys, who have become their straw bosses in the matter.

The powerful have learned that it is easier and cheaper to buy black leaders than to bust them. The real money is in busting street blacks in bulk. That's what racial profiling and the "war on drugs" are all about. And Reverend isn't the only one bought and paid for. Past NAACP director Ben Chavis and ex-chair Doc Bill Gibson were part of the demise of grassroots' effectiveness in extracting even a remote semblance of accountability from predatory banks. The only thing that the late Khalid Muhammed ever got right was what he said about Ben Chavis. Condemning Chavis for stealing from the people, he called him counterrevolutionary. But, that's what all the big daddies do. It's what Ben Chavis was taught, by experts. Look at the King family's exploitation of All-Things-Martin, right down to pimping footage of his speech from the March on Washington as a product advertisement.

Today many civil rights organizations work counter to black empowerment. Promotion of individuals, symbols and organizations, all living on someone else's past glories, replace movements of the poor and disenfranchised. The NAACP and the Urban League have their fair share or economic development programs. The black churches and preachers take the money with no demand on the system except maybe a bank loan to build a bigger church. Every big daddy gets as much money as he can from wherever or whomever he can get it. COINTELPRO was never so effective at turning politics in the black community to shit.

The movement business is good to Reverend and his kids. One son is an alcohol distributor in Chicago, a second is an investment banker and Jesse Junior is a Congressman. But in spite of the fact that one son is a "legal" dealer, Reverend is hypocritical on the issue of drug legalization and on the wrong side in the war on drugs. What he should do is demand that the POWs be set free. Start protesting at the prisons. Call for active resistance against the drug war. Those are things that need saying and doing. The drug war is now spawning the next wave of black voter disenfranchisement. The background checks by the Florida Republicans were possible because of that state's disenfranchisement of ex-felons for 15 years after their term of imprisonment. That's why the Republicans were able to run criminal background checks, falsely report the results, and prevent balloting by thousands of black voters. The same tactics are going on in South Carolina and across the South. The only way to stop this is to oppose drug criminalization.

Check cashing services, cash advance lending, predatory mortgage practices, property rights, land loss and decreasing home ownership are just some of the pressing economic issues affecting blacks. In cities such as Washing-

SUBSCRIPTION INFO

Enter/Renew Subscription here:

One year individual, $40
($35 email only / $45 email/print)
One year institution/supporters $100
One year student/low income, $30
T-shirts, $17
Please send back issue(s)
_____ ($5/issue)

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

_____

Payment must accompany order, or just dial 1-800-840-3683 and renew by credit card. Add $17.50 for foreign subscriptions. If you want CounterPunch emailed to you please supply your email address. Make checks payable to: **CounterPunch.**
Business Office
PO Box 228, Petrolia, CA 95558

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ton, DC, Charlotte, Atlanta and many others, inner city blacks are dealing with redevelopment, gentrification and eroding voting districts. So why aren't the Rainbow, Urban League, NAACP or the SCLC dealing with these problems?

Comes a recession in the country and it's a depression in the black community. The latest unemployment statistics, officially edging towards 10 percent, bear out worsening conditions in black households. How does Reverend's Wall Street Project help black Americans forced into the secondary lending markets during hard times or at any time? The high interest charges blacks pay is what makes the investment bankers on Wall Street billionaires; it's where the funding for the Wall Street Project comes from, too, and Reverend and the other big daddies know it, which is why they don't challenge it.

Ask average people what the Rainbow stands for and if they say anything it will be "it's Jesse Jackson's organization". But what has Reverend and his organization produced? What can that person on the street see, feel and touch? No one can call the organization on the phone for help. They can't get a question answered or a problem solved. They see no action. That's because there is nothing — for them.

Reverend's legacy is that he ran for president, twice. He's been out the movement for a long, long time. He's been in the movement prevention business just as long. Any chance of movement building died when he dismantled the Rainbow to suit Clinton and Ron Brown in 1988. After that Reverend truly became "Jesse Jackson Inc". The tradeoff for scattering those troublemakers brought by Jackson's 1984 and 1988 campaigns into the political tent was the job of head overseer on the Democratic Party plantation. Now Reverend holds the franchise on black votes. If he has a fear, it's of losing the franchise.

Many of those at the center of the Jackson campaigns, like Jack O'Dell who worked with Martin Luther King, Frank Watkins who worked with Reverend for more than 20 years, Ron Daniels, Nancy Ware, Steve Cobble and a host of others including me— wanted to connect to the people, build an organization and create a movement. They were not chumps. They put the larger than life photos of Reverend at the headquarters in Chicago in historical prospective. But big daddyism got the best of them. They moved on and the Rainbow's potential to really change and challenge America went with them.

As an institution, the Rainbow will fade away completely. Then maybe we will build organizations capable of responding to the people's needs. Maybe if we stop depending on the straw boss we can take protest back to the streets and begin tearing down those institutions and ideas that need to crumble. Since the glory days of 1988, we have been poor stewards of the goals of a progressive/black movement. The success of that movement is the salvation of this country; its failure is its damnation.

Reverend's legacy is that he ran for president, twice. He's been out the movement for a long, long time. He's been in the movement prevention business just as long.

The goals were set at the founding of this country. Black politics is the counter to anti-black politics. It's the demand for equal opportunity, equal treatment and protection, due process and economic justice for the descendants of enslaved Africans, which is the only way those things can be ensured for everyone else. CP

Kevin Alexander Gray *is a long-time civil rights activist. He lives in South Carolina.*

CounterPunch
3220 N Street, NW, PMB 346
Washington, DC 20007-2829

Attention Subscribers: the number that appears above your name on the mailing label refers to the ISSUE NUMBER of CounterPunch after which your subscription expires, NOT the month. Don't worry, this confuses everyone.

Send Kerrey's Salary to Vietnam as Reparations!

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED